Anti-Displacement

Overview of Displacement

Displacement, in the context of communities, occurs when a change of conditions, such as cost of rent or increased property taxes, no longer make it feasible for an individual, household, or business to remain in a neighborhood or district in which they were previously well-established. Displacement is often the result of gentrification, as investments in older neighborhoods can increase housing costs and the neighborhood's cultural character. In Charlotte, those most vulnerable to displacement are often those who have suffered most and benefited least over decades of growth and development.

**Charlotte Communities Vulnerable to Displacement**

Charlotte's population growth and fast-paced development over the last 20 years has caused a lack of affordable rental and homeownership options throughout the city. The majority of Charlotte's recent growth in housing and employment has been in Center City, University City, and south Charlotte. Many of the older, diverse, and naturally affordable neighborhoods adjacent to these places are experiencing gentrification and displacement as investments raise property values and rents (Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan p. 28).

Figure 1

To effectively respond to and implement effective strategies, the city must be able to predict trends that lead to displacement. The Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan) documented four measures as major contributors to vulnerability to displacement:

- poverty rate,
- educational attainment,
- race, and
- age

The map in **Figure 1** from the 2040 Plan identifies Charlotte communities most vulnerable to displacement based on the contributing characteristics. The city's Office of Data and Analytics has also developed a data-driven Displacement Dashboard that uses Neighborhood Change Score, the Quality of Life Explorer, and Water Bill Delinquency to identify neighborhoods that are currently experiencing displacement pressures such as housing unaffordability and COVID-related difficulties. This dashboard is the first step in a larger anti-displacement strategy that is being developed by the city, the details of which are discussed below.
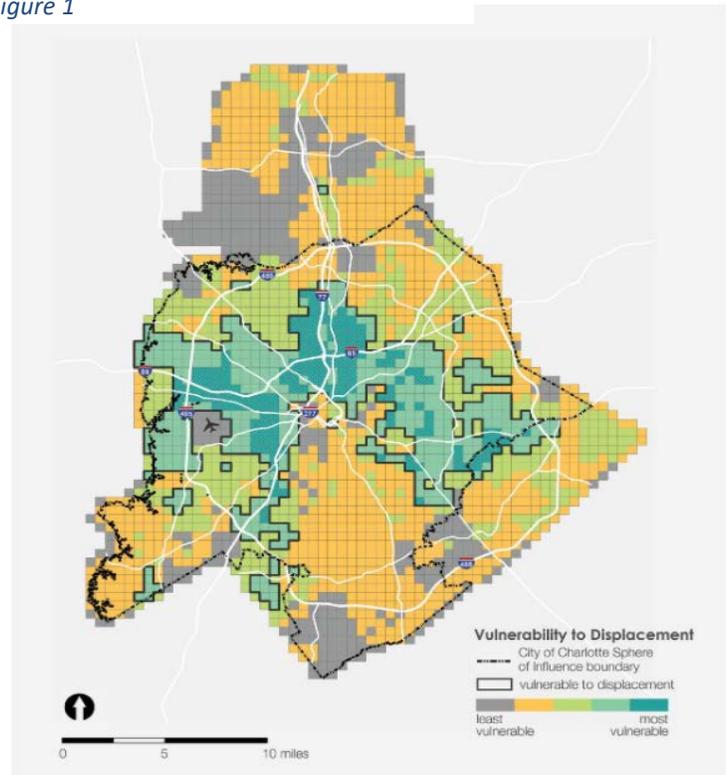
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Charlotte's Current Policies, Resources, and Initiatives

City Council has adopted a suite of policies that address one of the key drivers of displacement—housing unaffordability. These include the Housing Charlotte Framework, the Housing Locational Policy, Guidelines for Preserving Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH), and Guidelines for Evaluation and Disposition of City Owned Land for Affordable Housing. Specific initiatives related to affordable housing include:

- Housing Trust Fund investments;

- Housing counseling services;

- Partnerships with Community Housing Development Organizations;

- Homeownership and down payment assistance (e.g., House Charlotte; Community Heroes Homeownership Program);

- Rental and utility assistance (e.g., Rent with EASE; Crisis Assistance Ministries partnership; other community partnerships);

- Repair and rehabilitation assistance (e.g., TLC by CLT Targeted Rehabilitation Program; Safe Home Rehabilitation Program; Housing Preservation Program);

- COVID-19 rent, mortgage, security deposit, and utility relief programs;

- Aging in Place tax abatement program;

- HousingCLT homelessness assistance program;

- Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Acquisition/ Preservation;

- Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) pilot program; and

- Other federally supported programming that provide tenant based rental assistance (e.g. HOME Investment Partnerships, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grants ESG), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grants, and housing vouchers).

The city is currently developing an anti-displacement strategy to leverage existing efforts alongside new and innovative programs. This strategy will use the Displacement Dashboard developed by the Office of Data and Analytics to target programs and investments toward the areas where there is the most need. Through data-driven outreach to vulnerable homeowners, renters, and potential landlords, the city will connect residents at risk of being displaced with the resources needed to assist the residents to remain in their communities. Looking ahead, the city is also considering preliminary strategies for the areas where there is potential risk of displacement in the future, such as the Silver Line footprint.

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Displacement Mitigation in the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan

The 2040 Plan is centered around an Equitable Growth Framework consisting of four Equity Metrics associated with the root causes of displacement:

- access to essential amenities, goods, and services;
- access to housing opportunities;
- access to employment opportunities; and
- environmental justice.

These metrics are the basis for the ten goals outlined in the 2040 Plan, as well as the specific objectives and recommendations associated with each goal.

Some goals within the 2040 Plan address displacement explicitly; others address the drivers of displacement without using the specific term. Goal 3: Housing Access for All and Goal 9: Retain our Identity and Charm contain the most direct anti-displacement provisions. The specific displacement-related objectives and recommendations associated with these goals are summarized below:

Goal 3: Housing Access for All — *"Charlotte will ensure opportunities for residents of all incomes to access affordable housing through the preservation of naturally occurring affordable and workforce housing and increasing the number of affordable and workforce housing units through new construction."* (Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan p. 106)

Objectives:

- Retain the number of naturally occurring affordable and workforce housing units in the community by managing change within existing neighborhoods

- Reduce the cost burden on households spending more than 45% of household income on housing and transportation

- Increase the rate of homeownership, especially within areas with low Access to Housing Opportunity Scores

- Increase housing opportunities and supporting infrastructure and amenities for residents choosing to age in place

Recommendations:

- Implement neighborhood conservation overlay districts where appropriate to encourage preservation of existing smaller footprint and Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing units

- Investigate new city-wide regulatory programs that require or incentivize development of affordable housing in mixed-income developments, standalone affordable housing developments, and targeted neighborhoods defined by the Equitable Growth Framework

- Coordinate and streamline existing programming that aids homeowners who desire to stay in their home

- Support an increased Housing Trust Bond allocation to expand programs and develop more units

- Continue preserving naturally occurring affordable housing, focusing on areas experiencing growth, through the creation and expansion of programs such as home repair and tree maintenance assistance

- Support the creation of affordable housing through strategic acquisition and use of public land

- Develop an affordable housing nexus study to determine the relationship between new development and the demand for affordable housing units

- Use the Equity Metrics to evaluate the affordability impact of rezoning applications

Goal 9: Retain our Identity and Charm — **"*Charlotte will retain the identity of existing neighborhoods by intentionally directing redevelopment, limiting displacement and cultivating community-driven placemaking that elevates the importance, quality and design of places.*"** (Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan p. 130)

Objectives:

- Reduce the speed and scale of older homes and existing trees being demolished and replaced in existing neighborhoods

- Reduce the number of residents experiencing involuntary displacement

- Improve jobs-skills match in areas with residents who may be vulnerable to displacement

- Capture new jobs proximate to neighborhoods with residents that may be vulnerable to displacement

- Provide financial and technical support to small businesses in areas at high risk for commercial displacement

Recommendations:

- Prioritize protection of neighborhoods highly vulnerable to displacement through the mapping of Place Types and associated zoning districts

- Mitigate neighborhood-defined cultural displacement through support and incentives for local businesses and community amenities, and funding to support artwork placed through the Public Arts Program

- Emphasize essential public amenities and facilities within neighborhoods vulnerable to displacement through the capital improvement prioritization process

- Support public outreach efforts to notify residents of city programs that help avoid displacement, such as aging-in-place programs

- Develop a monitoring system to track redevelopment in historic areas and neighborhoods vulnerable to displacement

- Explore implementation of "neighborhood character" overlay zoning in appropriate neighborhoods to reduce or mitigate changes to community character

Anti-Displacement Stakeholder Commission

Some members of the community have advocated for the commission of an "anti-displacement stakeholder group" to serve in an advisory role to City Council and staff for the remainder of the 2040 Plan development and implementation process. Community engagement was critical to the development of the 2040 Plan, and continued engagement through a community-driven stakeholder group could provide real-time insight into community sentiment related to the plan. A stakeholder group could also serve as ambassadors for the 2040 Plan and help foster the connections necessary to implement the various community-driven programs the plan recommends. The city has leveraged similar groups around other city priorities (e.g., the Community Input Group's role in developing the SAFE Charlotte plan). These past examples could serve as a template for an "anti-displacement stakeholder commission", should the city decide to convene such a group.

Other Examples of Anti-Displacement Strategies[1]

Austin, Texas: Established an Anti-Displacement Task Force that conducted a year of public outreach and developed policy recommendations for the city. Voters also approved a $250 million affordable housing bond in 2018, which included funding for acquisition, rehab, and development and maintenance of affordable rental housing.

Denver, Colorado: Created a Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization Team to implement programs assisting residents and businesses in targeted communities undergoing large-scale development.

Nashville, Tennessee: Incorporated an equity lens into the city's performance management system to evaluate the equity impacts of budget and policy decisions made by the city.

Portland, Oregon: Partnered with community organization to develop robust tenant screening, security deposit, and fair chance housing policies. The city also hosted a two-day convening to develop a robust anti-displacement strategy, culminating in the creation of an Anti-Displacement Action Plan with funding for both city and community partners. Voters approved a $653 million bond for affordable housing in 2018, and a $250 million tax on high-income residents and businesses to provide support for unhoused residents in 2020.

Twin Cities, Minnesota (Minneapolis & Saint Paul): Minneapolis passed a tenant screening protection policy, including protections for people with criminal records. The city and community partners are also working to develop a tenant opportunity to purchase/right of first refusal policy, a community preference policy, and a right to counsel policy. Saint Paul city council also passed a set of tenant protections in July 2020, including just cause for eviction, tenant screening guidelines, a security deposit limit, and advance notice of sale before an affordable property is placed on the market.

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[1] Schildt, Chris, PolicyLink, "Lessons from the All-In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network", November 2020